



The Insider

www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator “Mickey” Switalski Senate District 10

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. Happy Holidays to you and yours. With the end of the year just around the corner, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for supporting me and for giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. The Michigan Legislature has accomplished many things this year and we will continue to do so next year. A New Year will bring with it many new and exciting challenges that I look forward to taking on. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-mail will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing, while keeping true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or contact me at my Roseville or Lansing office. Please have a safe and wonderful holiday season and have a Happy New Year!

Secretary of State's fees

Many constituents in our district may be unaware of the new fee increases and deadlines that the Secretary of State has implemented. These changes took effect on Oct. 1.

Among the changes includes a late fee for individuals who renew their licenses or vehicle registrations after their expiration dates. The Secretary of State states that the new fees will not change the expiration dates of driver's license or vehicle registrations. The Secretary of State also advises drivers that their materials must be postmarked or dated on or before the expiration dates. Below is a table from the Secretary of State listing the new fees.

Driver License and State Identification Card Fees

Operator's License	
Original	\$25
Renewal	\$18
Duplicate	\$9
Correction	\$9
Late renewal fee	\$7
Chauffeur's License	
Original	\$35
Renewal	\$35
Duplicate	\$18
Correction	\$18
Commercial Driver's License Group Designation	

Original	\$25
Renewal	\$25
Motorcycle endorsement	
Original Endorsement (first) or T.I.P.	\$13.50
Renewal	\$5
Moped License	
Original	\$7.50
Renewal	\$6
State Identification Card	
State Identification Card	\$10

In addition, the Michigan legislature passed the Driver Responsibility Program. The program was designed to promote greater traffic safety by increases fines for those that are considered to be habitually dangerous drivers who commit such things as speeding or reckless driving. The program will only consider traffic incidents that occurred on or after October 1, 2003.

Drivers that have accumulating seven or more points on their driving licenses will be assessed a \$100 fine, with an additional \$50 fine for each point above seven. These fines would be assessed once a year. In addition, certain offenses are considered to be “qualified offenses” and carry their own fines. These include such things as drunk driving (\$1,000), reckless driving (\$500) and no proof of insurance (\$150), among others. The fines would be assessed for two consecutive years. Currently, there is a bill working its way through the House that would waive the no proof of insurance fine if a driver can prove that they had a valid insurance at the time of a traffic stop prior to their court date. If a driver can not prove that they had insurance, the fine would be \$600.

For more information, please check out the Department of State’s website at www.michigan.gov/sos or call the Secretary of State’s Customer Call Center at (517) 322-1460.

Mickey’s Legislation

Combating Teen Smoking

State Senator Mickey Switalski (D-Roseville) will be introducing a bill that would increase the fines for businesses selling tobacco products to teens under the age of 18, when the Michigan Senate returns from its holiday recess on January 14.

The bill would introduce the concept of progressive discipline for offenders. A first offense would result in a fine of \$50, with a second offense resulting in a \$100 fine. A third or any subsequent offense would increase the fine to \$200. The increase of fines would come in addition to any attorney and court fees. Currently, Michigan law provides for a \$50 fine for each offense, regardless of the frequency of offenses.

The Michigan Department of Community Health estimates that over one-fourth of adolescents smoke and that the majority of smokers started before the age of 18. The department also said that tobacco-related fatalities are the number one cause of preventable deaths in Michigan. In addition, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that tobacco-related illness causes 440,000 deaths and more than \$75 billion in direct medical costs per year.

Mickey's Corner

For the Birds: Mickey responds to letters

My name is Steven, and I am in the 5th grade. My class has been studying the Kirtland's warbler. We have learned that the Kirtland's warbler is an endangered animal. I think that if the Kirtland's warbler were the State Bird more people would work to save it.

The Kirtland's warbler only nests in Michigan. And it only migrates to Bermuda. We also learned that it wasn't even a choice in the vote in 1931!

The robin is already the state bird in Wisconsin and Connecticut. But the Kirtland's warbler is unique to Michigan. People come from all over the world to see it, so it brings money to the state.

Thanks for reading my letter, and I encourage you to vote YES for the warbler.

Steve Simpkins
Grand Blanc, MI

Thank you for your fine letter regarding the Kirtland Warbler. You nearly convinced me to vote to make the Warbler the state bird.

However, there are a couple of reasons why I would like to see the robin remain our state bird, and I hope you will give these reasons careful consideration when you decide what you really want as our state bird.

I am sure the Warbler is a wonderful bird, but do you want a bird that leaves Michigan and spends the winter in Bermuda to be our state bird? True blue Michiganders tough it out in the winter.

More importantly, the Warbler is found in only 15 of Michigan's 83 counties. Don't you agree that a state bird should represent the whole state? Whenever I see a robin, I point it out to my 10-year old son, Liam, who is in the 5th grade, like you. I tell him, "There goes our state bird!" If the Warbler were our state bird, most people would never see one.

When DDT, a harmful pesticide, was accumulating in our environment, the robin population dropped. When you saw a robin, it looked sickly. People were concerned and banned DDT. They monitored the robin population and were pleased to see robins make a comeback.

I hope you see the merits of keeping the robin as our state bird. I'll bet most of your class, which have been studying the Warbler, want it to be the state bird. If you decide to support the robin, will you get up in class and make a speech in the robin's favor, and try to convince your classmates? If you do, I think you'll find it is fun to debate issues. You might even wind up a Senator someday.

Sincerely,
Michael Switalski
State Senator
10th District

Coffee Hours

*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville I will not have very many coffee hours in that area. I encourage you to visit the Roseville office.

Sterling Heights/Utica

**Jan. 5, Feb. 9, Mar. 1
7-9 P.M.**

Location: Sterling Heights Library
(Utica and Dodge Park roads)

Clinton Township

**Dec. 29, Jan. 26, Feb. 23, Mar. 29
7-9 P.M.**

Location: Clinton Township Library
(35891 Gratiot and 15 mile)

Contact My Office

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